

Did it represent divine wisdom or foolishness? John Locke also felt the ambivalence, by now usual toward the Jews. As Sutcliffe describes him, he expressed a 'tangled jumble of attitudes' toward Judaism, fundamentally arrogant and intolerant (p. 220). So much for the English nationalist view of this man.

Another group that drew on Jewish arguments to attack Christians were the Deists. Some, like the Marquis d'Argens, wrote as if the Jews *were* Deists. Sutcliffe suggests that these critics found intellectual pleasure in the paradoxes and inversions they produced. It would be useful to have a theory of such intellectual pleasure. Why do paradoxes create pleasure?

One of the novelties of the eighteenth century was the increasing number of bourgeois, semi-assimilated Jews. They changed the terms of the debates because they were no longer totally 'other', and yet they were not 'the same'.

For Sutcliffe, Voltaire brings together in exemplary fashion the ambivalences of Bayle, the Deists and the radicals. He used attacks on the Jews as a way of attacking his real nemesis, the Christians. So he tried to make them look bad as ancestors of the Christians and make them look good as a contrast to the Christians. An important point is that most of this was rhetoric and the posing of a typical public intellectual; he never really probed beneath the surface in his understanding of the Jews.

Sutcliffe concludes with many useful interpretative suggestions, such as the futility of simply dividing up the good things and the bad things that were said about the Jews. As he points out, they were often said by the same people in the same breath, so there is more here than simple philo-semitism or anti-semitism. This may be a general rule for understanding these phenomena in much of world history.

Based on familiarity with a wide range of primary and secondary materials in Latin, French, German and Dutch, this volume makes a valuable contribution to the ongoing reassessment of the Enlightenment(s) by bringing out the central role played by responses to Judaism.

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ADAM ZACHARY NEWTON, *Facing Black and Jew: Literature as Public Space in Twentieth-Century America*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999. xviii, 218 pp. £10.00. ISBN 0-521-65870-5.

This, the seventh volume in CUP's excellent *Cultural Margins* series, deals with 'juxtaposed literary fiction by African American and Jewish American writers' (p. xii). As the title suggests, Newton is interested in 'literary facings', that is, the possibilities of reading Black and Jewish literature alongside each other. Of course, to some extent such an exercise is bound to be artificial, but Newton is less concerned with conscious leanings or borrowings than with the ways these two literary traditions speak to each other and 'create nuances of entanglement, connection [and] proximity' (p. 15).

Facing Black and Jew pursues this theme through a series of four case studies (or couplings). Appropriately, Newton starts with Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* and Henry Roth's *Call it Sleep*, two major texts that in quite different ways explore the theme of 'mobile identity'. This is followed by careful readings of Chester Himes's *If He Hollers Let Him Go* and Saul Bellow's *The Victim*, each of which deals with the effects of intensely personalised prejudice, and David Bradley's *The Chaneyville Incident* and Philip Roth's *Operation Shylock*, which deal with the 'defining presence of cultural tragedy' (p. 82), in the shape of African slavery and the European Shoah, respectively. Again, these 'congruences' may seem contrived or artificial, but in Newton's

expert hands they produce a 'composite, bifold story of recognition' (p. 83) that forces us to read these texts in new and exciting ways.

In the last of his case studies, Newton turns to what he calls the 'imagining of otherness' (p. 111), that is, Black attempts to imagine Jews, and vice versa. In many ways, this has proved a flawed project. As Newton points out, in Bernard Malamud's case it has tended to result in the reiteration of a specific (negative) allegory of otherness: 'Jews approach; Blacks demur' (p. 123). On the other hand, Newton sees in John Edgar Wideman's short stories a very different aesthetic at work; a form of literary crosshatching that imagines a shared public space between Blacks and Jews. Such empathetic stances find an echo in the forms of 'displacement' (or 'borrowings') that Newton discusses in his final chapter on David Mamet's *Homicide* and the O. J. Simpson trial. But, in truth, the glib analogies that Johnnie Cochran drew in the Simpson trial between racist invective and National Socialist ideology do no-one any good. If anything, they have tended to encourage a culture of victimhood in the United States that has temporarily soured Black-Jewish relations, a point that Newton himself alludes to, if only in passing.

Facing Black and Jew is a demanding book that assumes not only a knowledge of twentieth-century Jewish-American and African-American fiction but also a familiarity with Emmanuel Levinas's ethical philosophy and Walter Benjamin's theory of allegory. Non-specialists, in particular, may find this off-putting. Another obstacle (at least for this reviewer) is Newton's penchant for infelicities like 'surplusive', 'sensationalistically', 'lexicalization', and 'inconsequentialize'. Nevertheless, this is an absorbing and highly intelligent work that asks us to view African-American and Jewish-American cultures in such a way that 'their contact with one another is genuinely a matter of enlightenment, of discovery not performance' (p. 167).

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HOUMAN SARSHAR (ed.), *Esther's Children: A Portrait of Iranian Jews*. The Center for Iranian Jewish Oral History, Beverly Hills, CA, 2002. xxii, 457 pp. \$110.00. ISBN 0827607512.

Since the Islamic Revolution of 1979 in Iran, nearly sixty per cent of the Jewish community there has emigrated and those remaining are in difficult straits. The cultural heritage of this large Diaspora community was slowly but surely fading away. The present work, a collection of twenty-five articles on the history of the Jews of Iran from biblical times until the end of the twentieth century, seeks to introduce this ancient community to a readership that will extend beyond the intimate circle of Judeo-Persian scholars and also to preserve the history, culture and traditions of this dwindling Diaspora community.

Of the twenty-five articles, six are historical essays that examine the status of the Jews from ancient times until the advent of the Islamic Republic. The other nineteen focus on a variety of cultural and social issues pertinent to each of the historical periods included, and especially on the twentieth century. The book concludes with a comprehensive bibliography of Judeo-Persian scholarship published to date in English, French, German, Hebrew and Persian. While the articles are without footnotes and bibliographic references, and at best can be described as 'scholarship with an agenda', the large amount of material on the twentieth century, particularly on social and cultural history, will probably be unfamiliar to a good many scholars of Jewish Studies, and might well serve as background reference reading, and the bibliography at the end is excellent. This being the case, a short review would seem to be in order.